



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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DRAFT MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monday, October 25, 2010
Nye County Commissioner Chambers
2100 E. Walt Williams Drive, Pahrump, NV 89048

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held a public meeting on October 25, 2010 -2:00 pm at the Nye County Commissioner Chambers, 2100 E. Walt Williams Drive, Pahrump, NV 89048. The State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items on October 25, 2010.

Board Members Present: Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD; Vance Vesco, Big Meadow CD; Chris Freeman, Nevada Tahoe CD; Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Joseph Fortier, CD of Southern Nevada; Donna Lamm, Southern Nye County CD; Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, UNR College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources.

Board Members Absent: Ed Foster, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

Others Present: Jim Lawrence, Executive Secretary, NV Division of Conservation Districts; Kelly McGowan, NV Division of CDs; Sandi Gotta, NV Division of CDs; Brandi Ré, NV Division of CDs; Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist; Marlene Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Barbara Perlman-Whyman, Nevada Tahoe CD, Butch Borasky; Southern Nye County Commissioner.

I. CALL TO ORDER- Quorum established.

A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 2:03pm. Introductions were made of those present. Commissioner Vesco joined the meeting via teleconference.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA - *ACTION*

A. The agenda was approved as written via a motion to approve by Commissioner Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Lamm, motion passed.

III. REVIEW, AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *ACTION*

A. *Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2010:* A motion to approve the minutes as written by Commissioner Rieman, seconded by Commissioner Freeman, motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – No public comment.

V. ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS - *ACTION*

A. Three terms expire in 2011 including Commissioners' Sicking, Lamm and Freeman. After a brief discussion, the motion made by Commissioner Rieman to re-elect Commissioner Sicking as the commission chair; was amended to postpone elections until the July commission meeting.

once the Governor's appointments are announced. The amended motion was seconded by Commissioner Lamm, motion passed.

VI. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION- Status of Division of Conservation Districts

1. *General – Jim Lawrence –*

- a. Mr. Lawrence updated the commission on the current budget with uncertainty of what will come with Governor Elect Sandoval's review; however with the current state deficit, additional cuts are eminent. The conservation district program does not rank high with the core mission criteria which is a concern. At this time there is not any discussion in eliminating the commission. A 20% reduction to a budget this limited is severe and will require the division to function in a reduced capacity. The division will no longer be able to cover the liability insurance for the districts; responsibility will fall on each individual district. There is a good possibility division staff will be cut. Jim's hope is to build a program that is more resilient in difficult financial times with possible partnerships to eliminate the dependence on the general fund. Chairman Sicking commented the direction conservation districts have been faced with is always doing more with less; the program has not been given the opportunity to grow. Commissioner Lamm reiterated the importance of partnerships to sustain the program.

2. *General/Correspondence – Kelly McGowan & Sandi Gotta*

- a. Kelly reviewed the minute and agenda logs, measurement indicators and financial report stating the minute and agenda log is looking good and is on track for the second quarter.
- b. Item 1, the districts ended the year matching \$22 dollars for every state dollar received. Item 2, 28 out of 28 districts were found in good standing. Item 3, staff projected meeting with 18/28 districts within the state; the division meet with 20/28 districts. Item 6, totaled \$200,000 in non-state funding generated by the division. Item 8 may be eliminated completely due to out of state travel funds being eliminated. Item 10 is down due to budget reductions. Item 12 indicates \$14,000 to 0, however, \$14,000 applied for and \$14,000 received will appear in the next quarter due to the NRCS grant. Item 13 will be lumped into item 12.
- c. The financial report summary of district expenditures for FY10 showed a matching ratio of 28.93:1 with a 30:1 projection as a match to state funding. This calculation is misleading as expenditures have not gone up; rather state funding has gone down.
- d. Sandi commented on the election memo sent to all district contacts via email and noted a hard copy was also mailed to the district chairman and employees.
- e. Sandi reviewed the district log report; indicating all reports had been received by the division for all 28 districts.
- f. Sandi notified the commission of a situation regarding workers comp and liability for district employees and volunteers. Districts are liable to pay their own workers comp through the State of NV Risk Management Department at a minimal state rate. Chairman Sicking questioned if liability and workers comp are both available to the districts? Sandi stated liability is available through the Attorney General's Office and workers comp is available through Risk Management. Noting the rate changes every year and fluctuates based on previous claims filed within the previous two years.

VII. AGENCY UPDATES –

A. UNR College of Agriculture Biotechnology and Natural Resources– Dr. Rangesan Narayanan –

1. Dean Thawley retired at the end of September.
2. Dr. Pardini was appointed interim dean and director for the next 18 to 24 months.
3. The college has reduced the number of departments from 5 to 3 departments; 2 existing departments, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Natural Resource & Environmental Science. The newly developed department will be called Food Agriculture and Nutrition. The department will contain some nutritional faculty and animal science veterinarians.
4. Great Basin Land Conservation Cooperative (GBLCC) will meet Friday, October 29, 2010 from 9:00-4:00 pm at the Silver Legacy in Reno, NV to plan the initial structure of the committee. The Provost has requested another initiative to coordinate activities between all Great Basin organizations; currently there are four organizations.
5. S-Bar-S Ranch is currently being sold for approximately 3 million; which included land and water rights. The funds will be going to the college.
6. The main station and meat packing plants are currently under review for viability before a decision will be made.
7. The University is interested in selling a property near Doyle, although no interest has been shown at this time.

B. Nevada Department of Agriculture – No Report

C. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Bruce Peterson –

1. Staff Update: They will be hiring a total of eight employees for field offices around the state; including biologists, range conservationists and an engineer in Elko. Their purpose will be to sell and deliver available programs to cover their salaries. NRCS has agreements with NDOW and USFWS on shared biologist positions.
2. Sage Grouse initiative is popular and doing well with potential growth.
3. A land trust agreement for monitoring easement programs with funding is available.
4. The grassland and wetland reserve programs do not require match and need to be utilized.
5. Washoe-Storey CD is moving into the NRCS state office in Reno.
6. Overall, NRCS has had a good year. NRCS is on a continuing resolution. If they receive the same funding as last year they will have a good pot of money to work with producers.
7. The Farm Bill expires 2012. Realistically it is still two or three years out. There is a possibility carbon and energy programs may be included. Still early and in the discussion and planning stage.

D. Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Pam Griswold – No Report

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Staff update on Northeast Elko Conservation District financial status.

1. Sandi explained to the commission the reissued check still has not been processed by the State Controller's Office. Chairman Agee Smith will be signing another affidavit to cancel the re-issued check. The authorization form for electronic fund transfer has been completed and the new check will be reissued as an EFT – direct deposit. The division will then process the districts FY11 state grant, also an EFT.

B. Strategic Plan – Review and status on the SCC Strategic Plan projects and consideration of actions to implement and move forward. *DISCUSSION/ACTION*

1. Sandi reviewed the strategic plan item to develop a database itemizing district project 'wish list' items. Sandi provided copies of the database rough draft spreadsheet format and the categories.

2. Staff requested direction from the commission how to proceed with the information?
 - a.) Follow-up with districts that have yet to respond? Or b.) Promote current projects received to show other districts the viability of the plan? Staff noted a large majority of weed programs had been listed. After discussion, the commission requested staff to send out a finalized summary of the information that was received to all districts. The commission asked staff to focus efforts to assist those that responded because they showed more interest in seeing their projects implemented. It was also suggested that sending the information out to those that had not yet responded may encourage them to do so.
3. Kelly discussed the noticeable need for conservation districts that indicated a full time or shared part-time employee to assist in obtaining funding to implement projects and nurture partnerships. Commissioner Freeman suggested Area Coordinators be used in a grant shared position.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and approval of all Conservation Districts' Final Financial Reports for FY 2010 as per NAC 548.090 and NAC 548.110 - ***ACTION*** The Commission will review and take action on the Final Financial Reports for FY 2010 for all Conservation Districts as per NAC 548.110 and 548.120.

1. Staff noted 21 of 28 districts submitted revised financial reports; however, no changes were significant enough to require greater review by the commission. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the Final Financial Reports for all 28 districts, Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, motion passed.

B. Review and approval of all Conservation Districts' Annual Reports for FY 2010 per NAC 548.110 - ***ACTION*** The Commission will review and take action on the Annual Reports for FY 2010 for all Conservation Districts as per NAC 548.110.

1. Staff reviewed the districts' annual reports and reported 27 of the 28 districts met the deadline. Ruby Valley CD submitted their report three days past the deadline. Ruby held a meeting and took action on the report, however failed to submit it to the division. Correspondence from the district indicated the intent was to comply and not meeting the due date was a simple oversight. Commissioner Rang made a motion to approve the annual reports for 28 districts, Commissioner Lamm seconded the motion, motion passed.
2. Staff acknowledged the receipt of all 28 districts' reports for consideration of district good standing for FY2011.

C. Review the Great Basin Water Authority's inter-basin water transfer recommendation letter and discuss whether the commission is supportive of their recommendations or would prefer drafting a recommendation letter themselves. - Commissioner Lamm - ***ACTION***

1. Chairman Sicking tabled this item to the meeting on Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

X. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

- A. Comments, Reports, Items to be included on the next agenda.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS- No public comment.

XII. ADJOURNMENT - *ACTION*

- A. Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 3:54 pm; to reconvene Wednesday, October 27, 2010 - 11:00 am at the conclusion of the NvACD annual business meeting.